



YOUNG & QUEER

REPORT

**YOUTH DRIVEN IDEAS FOR
A BETTER VICTORIA**

AUTHORS

Teneille Clerke
Micah Scott

EDITORS

Tony Lee
Miller Soding

WORKSHOP FACILITATORS

Sha Gaze
Carly Fern
Jessica Walton
Fleassy Malay

PHOTOGRAPHY

Alexis Desaulniers-Lea
Kayzar Bhatthawalla
Parul Chandla

MARKETING

Adrian Murdoch

WORKSHOP AND DATA ASSISTANTS

Mira Melaluca
Ren Sammut
Kerith Manderson-Galvin
Dove Quinn
Luis Robertson
Milo Milton-Moon
Lucy Sinfield-Jones
Kathleen Campone

WORKSHOP CONSULTANTS

Bexx Djentuh Davis
Sage Akouri

YOUTH ADVISORY PLANNING GROUP

Adrian Jennings
Claire Bostock
Cordelia Attenborough
Milo Milton-Moon
Aiden Stevenson

MEDIA PARTNER

VICE Media

REGIONAL PARTNERS

WayOut Wadonga
Headspace Mildura
Headspace Horsham

Minus18 Foundation Ltd
info@minus18.org.au
www.minus18.org.au

Champions for LGBTIQ youth.
Minus18 is Australia's charity for LGBTIQ youth, hosting events, workshops and campaigns to create an Australia free from homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

© Minus18 Foundation Ltd 2019
Published: May 2019

  @MINUS18YOUTH

YOUNG & QUEER

REPORT

YOUTH DRIVEN IDEAS FOR
A BETTER VICTORIA

120 queer youth share their ideas for a more LGBTIQ inclusive Victoria.

 MINUS18

Published May 2019 by the Minus18 Foundation.

This report was created on the land of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin nation.
We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First People
and Traditional Custodians of the land where we work.



QUEER IDEAS FESTIVAL

27TH - 28TH SEPTEMBER 2018

120 LGBTIQ youth leaders gathered for *Queer Ideas Festival* at Deakin Edge, Federation Square in Melbourne. The two-day festival was opened by the Honourable Martin Foley, Victorian Minister for Equality.

The purpose of the gathering was to gain insight into the lived experiences and future ideas for and by young LGBTIQ Victorians. LGBTIQ groups from all over Victoria attended the event, with groups and individuals from Albury Wadonga, Mildura and Horsham offered regional travel scholarships to attend.

DAY 1

The 120 young leaders were divided into 4 workshop groups, hosted by leading Victorian LGBTIQ facilitators. The young people attended a two hour workshop in the morning and swapped to another in the afternoon.

DAY 2

Inspiring young keynote speakers from diverse backgrounds within the LGBTIQ community gave empowering speeches on how they have made social change in their community, answering the eager questions from young people in the process.

The festival ended in celebration with a closing concert featuring local queer identifying performers, dancers and musicians, and was opened to over 500 additional LGBTIQ youth from Victoria.

OUTPUTS

From the extensive data collected throughout and after *Queer Ideas Festival*, Minus18 developed 3 outputs.

Q Minus18 Reports

Minus18.org.au



1. Young & Queer Book

A narrative book documenting the stories and experiences of LGBTIQ youth in Victoria today.



2. Youth Futures Video

A video diary capturing the thoughts and ideas of the queer youth participants.



3. Young & Queer Report

This report, detailing 16 ideas participants had for a more inclusive Victoria.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Victorian Government identified that young LGBTIQ people need more opportunity to have their say on issues that matter to them and be actively involved and engaged in decision-making processes. In 2018, the Minus18 Foundation was provided with funding from the Department of Premier and Cabinet to host the first *Queer Ideas Festival*. Minus18 were then asked to report on the ideas and solutions that LGBTIQ young people have for the future of Victoria (based on what was discussed at the festival). This reporting incorporated both published and interactive formats to capture the variety of perspectives and lived-experiences of the young people involved.

2. PURPOSE

The Minus18 Foundation developed the *Queer Ideas Festival* to provide a forum for LGBTIQ youth to discuss issues affecting them and to create a platform and channel for their ideas and solutions to be communicated back to leaders in Victoria. These leaders include the Victorian Government, schools, community organisations, media entities and businesses, with the purpose to provide high-level actionable youth-determined priorities.

The report summarises the views of the LGBTIQ people who participated in the festival. Minus18 will engage with the Victorian Government to advance the ideas in the report.



METHOD

We learned a lot running *Queer Ideas Festival* and we'd love to share this with you. Our full methodology is described in the back of this report on page 29. Here's an overview:

1. PLANNING & DESIGN

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2018

A. RESEARCH

Minus18 met with other organisations to learn from the youth summits they had held.

C. WORKSHOP DESIGN

LGBTIQ workshop facilitators from diverse genders and cultural backgrounds were recruited to develop the workshops in conjunction with the Youth Advisory Group.

B. YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP

A group of five LGBTIQ young people aged 15-25 formed the youth advisory group to inform the festival and workshop design.

D. PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

Promotional material was launched. Applications for the workshops were opened. 120 youth participants were chosen, with priority given to ensuring a diverse range of sexual identities, genders, cultural identities, abilities, locations, socioeconomic backgrounds and lived experiences were represented.



2. FESTIVAL & DATA COLLECTION

27-28 SEPTEMBER 2018

A. WORKSHOPS

Two half day workshop streams were held to capture discussion, experiences and ideas of participants. Audio recording and notes were taken during the workshops.

C. VIDEO DIARIES

Video interviews with twenty young people were held to capture their experiences, and their future ideas for Victoria.

B. KEYNOTES - LIVE STREAMING

Four youth leaders presented keynotes which were live streamed via Facebook.

D. OTHER

Interactive posters, drawing tables, and online surveys were also used to capture experiences and ideas.



3. REPORTING & DATA ANALYSIS

OCTOBER 2018 - JANUARY 2019

A. Data Collation

Data from the workshops, keynotes, video diaries, surveys and drawings were collated by Minus18 into 4 themes and written out as 16 "ideas".

C. Publishing

3 outputs were created from *Queer Ideas Festival* and published online via minus18.org.au. These are:

- Young & Queer Narrative Book
- Youth Futures Video
- Young & Queer Report

B. Idea Voting

These 16 ideas were posted digitally to event participants for them to vote on their own priorities and which were most important to them.



PARTICIPANTS OVERVIEW

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

(n=120)



120
YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

IDENTITIES

Bisexual	57%
Queer	39%
Non-binary	25%
Trans / Transgender	24%
Gay	20%
Lesbian	19%
Person of Colour	18%
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	17%
Asexual	15%
Person of Faith	13%
Living with a Disability	12%
Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander	2%

AGE

14 - 16 Years Old	45%
17 - 20 Years Old	46%
21 - 25 Years Old	9%

LOCATION

24% travelled more than 100km from Melbourne CBD to attend the event.
26% travelled more than 2 hours from Melbourne CBD to attend the event.

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

(n=88)

86% of participants, after *Queer Ideas Festival*, said they feel "a lot more" or "way more" prepared to create change in their community

77% of participants, after *Queer Ideas Festival*, said they feel "a lot more" or "way more" comfortable with their LGBTIQ identity

86% of participants, after *Queer Ideas Festival*, said they feel "slightly more", "a lot more" or "way more" heard by their Government and Community

99% of attendees, after *Queer Ideas Festival*, said they felt safe and supported at the event

The dance was the best in my opinion but the workshops were great they really made me feel as if I belonged by hearing stories just like mine.
- Participant, 16 years old

I loved the workshop on day 1 about issues that queer youth face. I also really loved the speakers and the panel day 2. It made me feel valid, cared for and like the work I do in my own life can be supported and is really worthwhile.
- Participant, 15 years old

THE IDEAS

These ideas represent hours of discussions and data collected from the 120 young people who attended *Queer Ideas Festival*. The ideas reflect their experiences, solutions and priorities for how to build a better, more inclusive Victoria.

The views represented are wholly those of the young LGBTIQ people who participated in the festival and are not Victorian Government policy. Minus18 will engage with the Government to advance the ideas reflected in this report.

IDEA VOTING

The 16 ideas were compiled by the Minus18 Foundation and shared with the young people via a closed Facebook group. The young people were then asked to vote for the ideas they were most passionate about. They were given the option to assign 0 votes, 1 vote, or 3 votes to any of the 16 ideas over one week.

109 young people voted.

SOLUTION PRIORITY MARKER

The solutions to implement these ideas are ranked in terms of priority as discussed in the workshops:

- ♥ Immediate Priority
- ♥ Medium Priority
- ♥ Long-term Priority



SUMMARY

SCHOOLS & EDUCATION

1. SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION 194 Votes

For secondary school sexual education to be inclusive of information on same gender sexual practice, consent, and asexual experiences.

2. ACTION AGAINST BULLYING 171 Votes

LGBTIQ youth deserve to be safe at school. All students and teachers should receive mandatory training and feel empowered to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.

3. TRANS & GENDER DIVERSE STUDENTS 146 Votes

For trans and gender diverse students to be safe and comfortable at school, have their identity respected, and for this to be enforced through policies and training.

4. SCHOOL GROUPS & EVENTS 125 Votes

Students to be provided with training to setup and facilitate LGBTIQ Peer Groups within schools. All schools should celebrate important LGBTIQ events, like IDAHOBIT, and focus on ensuring their school events, like formals, are LGBTIQ inclusive.

COMMUNITY

5. RURAL / REGIONAL EVENTS 136 Votes

For young people from regional and rural areas to have more opportunities to access LGBTIQ events, both inside and outside their communities.

6. LGBTIQ YOUTH EVENTS & SPACES 130 Votes

For more regular, youth-only events that provide opportunities to make friends, learn about identities and foster community between LGBTIQ young people.

7. LGBTIQ ELDERS & HISTORY 120 Votes

That LGBTIQ History is taught and celebrated with queer youth. More opportunities should be created for LGBTIQ youth to meet with and learn from older LGBTIQ people in a facilitated way.

8. INTERSECTIONALITY 116 Votes

For specific education to be developed on the diverse identities within the LGBTIQ community, especially on neurodivergent, QTIPoC, people of faith, regionally located, bisexuals and First Nations identities.

9. REPRESENTATION IN THE MEDIA 112 Votes

For the media to respect LGBTIQ identities, have more meaningful representation of diverse LGBTIQ identities, and stop 'queer-baiting' audiences.

10. LISTEN TO AND RESPECT LGBTIQ YOUTH 109 Votes

For 'people in authority' (especially government, community services, schools and businesses) to embed young people into their decision-making processes and provide active and visible LGBTIQ inclusion within their programs and culture.

COMING OUT & WELLBEING

11. SUPPORT AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA 111 Votes

For more support to be provided to LGBTIQ youth who experience homophobia and transphobia. A Government funded campaign should be created to reduce community abuse against LGBTIQ young people.

12. RELATIONSHIPS 110 Votes

For more support and resources to be provided to young people to inform on positive and healthy LGBTIQ relationships, and to provide information and support to young people experiencing family / partner violence.

13. COMING OUT TO FAMILY 104 Votes

To provide assistance to LGBTIQ youth and their families through peer support, counselling, as well as published resources for young people to give to their family members.

14. MEDICAL INCLUSION AND ACCESS 96 Votes

That doctors and mental health professionals have compulsory training on LGBTIQ inclusion, with particular focus on supporting trans and gender diverse young people.

15. YOUTH LED SUPPORT & RESOURCES 94 Votes

To increase funding for video, online and published resources that are created by young people to help other young people come out and accept their identities.

16. SUPPORT FOR QTIPoC AND A PEOPLE OF FAITH 91 Votes

Support provided for people to bridge their QTIPoC/ faith-based identities and their LGBTIQ identities.

FULL IDEAS & SOLUTIONS →



SCHOOL & EDUCATION

Themes of school and education were raised by participants in nearly all discussions, surveys and activities throughout the *Queer Ideas Festival*. Overwhelmingly, young people were eager to share their experiences, and spoke at length to the challenges they still face, or have recently faced at school, particularly instances of abuse and bullying where they felt that staff did not fulfil their obligation to support them.

Despite these negative experiences, many young people shared stories about the positive impact that LGBTIQ activities have had, especially among those who had supportive teachers, friends and LGBTIQ-specific school groups or visibility programs.

The young people ranked sexual health education and taking action against bullies (especially for trans and gender youth) as their key priority areas for Victoria.

Some young people were unaware or unsure of whether LGBTIQ support programs, such as Safe Schools, still existed or were present in their school. This uncertainty contributed to feelings of being unsupported by their schools and the Government more broadly.

Overall, young people shared that they want to feel safe and supported at school and for their LGBTIQ identities to not just be tolerated but taught and celebrated as a means of reducing the bullying they experience.

These are their ideas for how to address this.

When I had my same sex partner at 15 come to school, I was bottled - things thrown at me, drinks poured on me at lunch, in clear view of teachers who never stood up for me or punished the students.

- Anon, 17 years old

It's critical to educate people in positions of power. For the safety of students, advocacy must come from teachers - not just queer youth.

- Vanessa, 17 years old

I was wearing my pride badge to school and a group of guys came up to me and said 'why do you have to rub your gayness in my face'.

- Anon, 15 years old

IDEA 1: SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION

FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL SEXUAL EDUCATION TO BE INCLUSIVE OF INFORMATION ON SAME GENDER SEXUAL PRACTICE, CONSENT, AND ASEXUAL EXPERIENCES.


194
VOTES

Experiences:

Young people in the workshops talked at length about how they felt the sexuality education they received was irrelevant to them, as it was centered around heterosexual and cisgender experiences.

They spoke about how this causes them to feel excluded, and fearful for contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) due to not being taught reliable safe sex practices they felt were relevant to their experiences.

Due to a lack of education, they also expressed feeling being at risk of being misinformed by their self-directed online research sources, through attempting to find their own information online, especially via pornography.

- 66% of LGBTIQ young people feel that there is a lack of relevant and inclusive sexual education at their schools. Students at Catholic or other Christian schools were more likely to indicate that their sexual education was mostly inappropriate (85%).¹
- "When it came to gay relationships in Sex Ed, my teacher turned to the page in the book and said 'and sometimes people have sex with the same gender too'. That was it. That was the only information I received." - Adrian, Participant

Their solutions are:

Sexuality education should be inclusive of LGBTIQ experiences

- ♥ For the Victorian sexuality education curriculum to include LGBTIQ experiences, especially gender identity as well as asexual and aromantic experiences.
- ♥ For this to include not only teaching experiences of safe same-gender sex, but also how to navigate sexual consent and healthy relationships.
- ♥ For LGBTIQ inclusive information on sexual health and relationships to be easily accessible to students outside of class, through printed resources or through Government endorsed and age-appropriate online links.

Sexuality education needs to remain up to date

- ♥ For teachers responsible for educating students on sexuality and sexual health to be required to undergo annual training to ensure they are teaching the most up-to-date information.
- ♥ For sexuality education to be standardised throughout all schools, even taught by a funded external provider, so that everyone is receiving the same up to date and inclusive information, rather than an individual's view.

IDEA 2: ACTION AGAINST SCHOOL BULLYING

LGBTIQ YOUTH DESERVE TO BE SAFE AT SCHOOL. ALL STUDENTS AND TEACHERS SHOULD RECEIVE MANDATORY TRAINING AND FEEL EMPOWERED TO TACKLE HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC BULLYING.


171
VOTES

Experiences:

Young people discussed that they feel schools are not taking homophobia and transphobia seriously. Students spoke about experiencing homophobic and transphobic slurs from other students.

Many young people reported being 'outed' by their school or other students without their consent.

They also spoke at length about their experiences being bullied, and their teachers not supporting them or enforcing anti-bullying policies.

Young LGBTIQ people in rural areas reporting needing more support, and that this needs to start in schools, specifically their teachers.

- 81% of young people who have experienced abuse, harassment or discrimination have thought of suicide and 37% have attempted suicide.²
- Statistics show that growing numbers of young LGBTIQ students are disclosing to their teachers about their sexuality and gender. 1998: 10-15% of students, 2004: 20-25%, 2010: 40%³
- "If you are in an area that has no 'out' person, training really needs to be provided on lived experience of LGBTIQ identity" - Finley, Participant

Their solutions are:

LGBTIQ education & training

- ♥ That education is provided to all students on the impact of homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- ♥ That annual training on LGBTIQ experiences is mandatory for all school staff (especially school nurses). This should include supporting trans youth through gender neutral language and correct pronoun use, as well as ways to support LGBTIQ young people who are neurodiverse or living with a disability.

Increase visibility and support

- ♥ For LGBTIQ specific resources to be easily accessible at the school nurse, library and wellbeing coordinator's offices and available without having to ask.
- ♥ That a clear point of contact is designated in schools for LGBTIQ students to speak to for support and information. This could be a designated "LGBTIQ Liaison Teacher" or a non-teacher social worker position, such as a 'Queer Officer'.
- ♥ For LGBTIQ specific curriculum, topics and examples to be integrated and taught in all subjects, especially history, humanities, literature and English.

IDEA 3: TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE STUDENTS

FOR TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE STUDENTS TO BE SAFE AND COMFORTABLE AT SCHOOL, HAVE THEIR IDENTITY RESPECTED BY STAFF AND STUDENTS, AND FOR THIS TO BE ENFORCED THROUGH GENDER NEUTRAL POLICIES AND TRAINING.


146
VOTES

Experiences:

The young people spoke about not having their gender identity respected at school. Many spoke about how teachers often refuse to use their correct pronouns.

Having to wear gendered uniforms was frequently described as "embarrassing" and "uncomfortable". Some felt forced to use toilets and change rooms that they didn't feel comfortable using.

Some young people shared their experiences of moving schools due to a lack of school support for their gender identity.

- "When I came out as trans I was going to a Catholic school. The Catholic school promised me that they would have the utmost support. I soon found they didn't when they wouldn't let me wear the male uniform and forced me to use the female staff toilet. Thankfully me and my parents decided to move me to a public school." - Luke, Participant
- 78.9% of trans young people have experienced issues with school, university or TAFE and have higher rates of wanting to hurt themselves, self-harming, reckless behaviour, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, diagnosis of depression and anxiety than those who did not experience issues with school, university or TAFE.⁴

Their solutions are:

Standardised gender neutral uniform policies in all schools

- ♥ For all schools to implement a gender neutral uniform policy, referring items by their function (eg 'skirt' 'shorts' 'pants') rather than by a gender (eg 'boys' 'girls'). This policy should also include gender neutral rules on hair length, makeup and piercings.
- ♥ For this policy to be standardised across all Victorian schools.

Gender neutral facilities available

- ♥ For accessible, self-contained bathrooms to be reassigned as 'gender neutral accessible bathrooms' to avoid stigmatisation of trans students who use them.
- ♥ For schools to stop the unnecessary segregation of classes and activities by gender (especially in health and P.E)
- ♥ For gender neutral, self-contained change rooms to be made available and easily accessible to all students.
- ♥ For school staff to undertake compulsory, annual gender diverse inclusivity training and be provided with informative resources and best practice methods to support trans students.

IDEA 4: SCHOOL GROUPS & EVENTS

FOR STUDENTS TO BE PROVIDED WITH TRAINING TO SETUP & FACILITATE LGBTIQ PEER GROUPS, AND FOR SCHOOLS TO CELEBRATE LGBTIQ EVENTS, LIKE IDAHOBIT. SCHOOLS NEED TO ENSURE THEIR EVENTS, LIKE FORMALS, ARE LGBTIQ INCLUSIVE.


125
VOTES

Experiences:

Young LGBTIQ people spoke about feeling excluded from their school formals and events as their schools did not do enough to make them feel safe.

Many young people spoke about not feeling supported to take same gender partners to their formal and in some cases not even being allowed to.

They discussed at length the positive impact having a visible point of support at school has had. Those who had access to queer groups at school unanimously agreed that the peer support made life easier for them. They also discussed how groups like 'Queer-Straight Alliances' raise visibility and create more supportive environments as a whole.

- 68% per cent of LGBTIQ young people without supportive classmates experienced social exclusion compared to 30% of those with supportive classmates.⁴
- "I came out to my entire grade...It was amazing. I then went on to start a LGBTIQ group to connect with others like me, and then that's when I realised my story is the exception, not the rule. I heard so many stories of rejection, hate and discrimination and it broke my heart." - Sam, Participant

Their solutions are:

Event inclusion

- ♥ For schools to implement LGBTIQ inclusive policies for all events, and explicitly let students know that same gender partners at school formals are welcome.
- ♥ To celebrate LGBTIQ specific days to show support to students and educate on LGBTIQ inclusion, especially, International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia on May 17.

LGBTIQ specific school groups

- ♥ To fund the creation of a framework and toolkit to support schools to develop their own LGBTIQ student groups.
- ♥ To make training and support available to students and teachers to implement this student group framework.
- ♥ To create cross-school pride networks that are funded to provide peer leadership and development opportunities for LGBTIQ students and teachers across multiple schools.
- ♥ For LGBTIQ student support groups to be compulsory in all Government schools.



COMMUNITY

Connection to peers, the older LGBTIQ community and influence of broader community (especially Government and media) were areas of discussion that participants engaged in most passionately.

Overwhelming, they felt disconnected to, and even fearful of, the older LGBTIQ community, and expressed a strong desire to bridge this perceived divide. This contributed to feelings of being misunderstood, unwelcome and unsure of what and where they would 'fit in' in the future.

Safe spaces—defined as youth-specific events where LGBTIQ identities are celebrated—formed a basis for many of their solutions. This highlighted how much they desired events and networking opportunities to access peer support. Many young people expressed a desire for more frequent opportunities to access these spaces to make friends and felt that there were not enough of these opportunities.

Young people from regional and rural areas echoed these views and felt strongly that the services and support opportunities available to them were “significantly less” and highlighted that they want more opportunities to access events both within their areas and outside (to support their privacy).

These are their ideas for how to address this.

I still had trouble with internalised homophobia. I have a supportive group of friends and yet I am constantly re-evaluating and modulating my behaviour to the right tone.

- Zofia

I would love to see a world where pride wasn't necessary, that we didn't have to fight for our rights. I wish that everyone, regardless of gender, race, religion, beliefs or sexuality, had equal rights and opportunities. I would want people not to be defined by anything they can't change. I wish no body was put to death because they love the same gender. I wish coming out as gay had the same reaction as coming out as Libra (in Astrology).

- Belle

I live in the country where if you are not white, straight and involved with the footy club, then you are an outsider and you do not belong.

- Fletcher

IDEA 5: RURAL / REGIONAL EVENTS

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE FROM REGIONAL AND RURAL AREAS TO HAVE MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO ACCESS LGBTIQ EVENTS, BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THEIR COMMUNITIES.


136
VOTES

Experiences:

Young people in rural areas spoke about feeling isolated. Many talked about how *Queer Ideas Festival* was the first LGBTIQ event they had been to.

Young people in rural areas said they had to travel long distances to attend LGBTIQ events. They identified that this is often costly to attend events and sometimes inaccessible to them, especially if they need to stay overnight.

Attending LGBTIQ events outside of their local areas provides a sense of safety, as these can often be accessed anonymously without the fear of being recognised.

Young people in rural areas expressed that there is not enough LGBTIQ youth events available to them.

- “There’s only been one event in my town since same sex (marriage) was legalised”
- Cherokee, Participant
- “I want to attend all the queer events, but can’t afford to leave my town and come into the city. It gets expensive.”
- Anon, Participant

Their solutions are:

Develop LGBTIQ events

- ♥ Develop travel scholarships for LGBTIQ youth in regional areas to access events and services outside of their community.
- ♥ Create more government funding for LGBTIQ events in rural areas.
- ♥ Host LGBTIQ youth events in rural areas and invite LGBTIQ young people from metro areas to attend.

IDEA 6: LGBTIQ YOUTH SPECIFIC EVENTS & SPACES

MORE REGULAR, YOUTH-ONLY EVENTS THAT PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE FRIENDS, LEARN ABOUT IDENTITIES AND FOSTER COMMUNITY BETWEEN LGBTIQ YOUNG PEOPLE.


130
VOTES

Experiences:

Young people spoke about the importance of LGBTIQ events being a great way to connect with other queer and gender diverse people, build community and allow them to make friends.

Some young people said they often feel “isolated” and “disconnected” from other LGBTIQ people due to the infrequency of youth-specific events and spaces.

Some young people attributed “nerves” and “anxiety” as key factors to not attending LGBTIQ youth events. They also expressed the feeling that the broader LGBTIQ community is focused on partying; loud music, dancing, entertainment and “hookup culture” (a culture that encourages casual romantic or sexual encounters).

Young people who were over 18 identified that there are not enough LGBTIQ spaces for them that are alcohol-free.

- 66.1% of young gender diverse people reported feeling isolated from not knowing other gender diverse people and that this contributed to poor mental health.⁵
- 86.2% of *Queer Ideas Festival* participants said they felt ‘a lot more connected’ or ‘way more connected’ to other LGBTIQ youth after attending the event.⁶

Their solutions are:

Event development and capacity building

- ♥ For the Victorian Government to create more funding pathways for regular LGBTIQ youth events.
- ♥ For additional support (such as peer or mentoring support) to be provided to young people with mental health challenges (such as anxiety) to attend events.

Youth specific events

- ♥ To create additional events for LGBTIQ youth that include spaces for conversation, learning, quiet time, and low-pressure facilitated networking.
- ♥ To create LGBTIQ youth events that are inclusive of family members attending and engaging.
- ♥ To create an LGBTIQ youth-friendly café or drop-in, where young people can regularly meet and socialise.

IDEA 7: LGBTIQ ELDERS & HISTORY

THAT LGBTIQ HISTORY IS TAUGHT AND CELEBRATED WITH QUEER YOUTH AND THE COMMUNITY. MORE OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD BE CREATED FOR LGBTIQ YOUTH TO MEET WITH AND LEARN FROM OLDER LGBTIQ PEOPLE IN A FACILITATED WAY.


120
VOTES

Experiences:

Young people expressed that they were not well informed of LGBTIQ history, especially from an Australian context. They had a strong desire to better understand the experiences of their community.

They felt that including the stories of LGBTIQ history in subjects at school would help to build inclusion and acceptance of LGBTIQ youth.

Young people expressed concern for older generations who also might be feeling disconnected from the community as they come into old age. There were tensions between wanting to engage and feel connected, but also expressed feeling fearful of doing this themselves.

The young people expressed feelings of fear and uncertainty about their futures, as some articulated that they did not identify with what they viewed as “the older LGBTIQ community”.

- “I would love to see queer history within general history.”
- Romilly, Participant

Their solutions are:

Intergenerational activities

- ♥ To develop and facilitate intergenerational online groups specifically for discussion between young LGBTIQ and elders in the community.
- ♥ For events and activities to be held that are designed to specifically connect young LGBTIQ people with older LGBTIQ people, that are “family friendly” and do not include alcohol.
- ♥ The development of mentoring programs or peer-to-peer support programs that link LGBTIQ elders with LGBTIQ youth.

LGBTIQ history education

- ♥ To celebrate Australian LGBTIQ history and to publish easy-to-access and engaging historical information.
- ♥ To develop LGBTIQ history curriculum and teaching toolkits in secondary schools, especially in subjects such as English, history and literature.

IDEA 8: INTERSECTIONALITY

FOR SPECIFIC EDUCATION TO BE DEVELOPED ON THE DIVERSE IDENTITIES WITHIN THE LGBTIQ COMMUNITY, ESPECIALLY ON NEURODIVERGENT, QTIPOC, PEOPLE OF FAITH, REGIONALLY LOCATED, BISEXUALS AND FIRST NATIONS IDENTITIES.


116
VOTES

Experiences:

Young people spoke at length about there being a huge need for more understanding around neurodiversity and mental health issues. Many said that their own issues weren’t respected in school.

They raised concerns about First Nations people not being represented in education, community and media, particularly LGBTIQ First Nations people.

Young people of faith said that growing up in a religious family and attending religious schools and church groups makes coming out as queer more complex, and therefore requires more specific support.

Young people raised concerns about people in the LGBTIQ community not accepting all members of the community, especially those from diverse backgrounds and identities.

Young people spoke passionately about bi-erasure, and those who identify as bisexual and pansexual spoke about not feeling accepted by both the LGBTIQ community and broader community when they are in a relationship that is visibly heterosexual.

- “Being Jewish and at a Jewish school makes it even harder as our religious practices forbid being queer. I don’t see many queer Jewish people.” - Elliot, Participant
- “I was told ‘You’re not gay, you just have autism.’” - Anon

Their solutions are:

Listen and include

- ♥ To prioritise diversity and provide LGBTIQ young people with leadership opportunities on steering committees, boards and planning groups within schools, Government and LGBTIQ organisations. This should include people with the following backgrounds/lived experiences:
 - Diverse mental health experiences (not just depression and anxiety)
 - Different levels and types of education; private, public, homeschool, distance education, university, TAFE and apprenticeships.
 - LGBTIQ young people with a disability, who are religious, with different cultural backgrounds, who are First Nations people and/or living in rural areas.

Resources, education and training

- ♥ To create peer-based resources and training written by people within the LGBTIQ community for a variety of audiences (including other LGBTIQ people) who are from diverse backgrounds and identities.

IDEA 9: REPRESENTATION IN THE MEDIA

FOR THE MEDIA TO RESPECT LGBTIQ IDENTITIES, HAVE MORE MEANINGFUL REPRESENTATION OF DIVERSE LGBTIQ IDENTITIES, AND STOP “QUEER-BAITING” AUDIENCES.

112 VOTES

Experiences:

Young people expressed that they want to see characters in film, TV and books that they can look up to and be inspired by. They felt that much of the representation in media was tokenistic.

They felt that stereotypes perpetuated by the media contribute to stigma about the LGBTIQ community, particularly the assumption that LGBTIQ people are overly sexual.

They expressed that the media reduces LGBTIQ characters to same-gender sexual relationships, and is not inclusive of asexual, transgender and intersex people.

- “Representation in the media is minimal, not inclusive and usually not accurate. This gives the general population bad information to begin with which forms stigma and stereotypes.”
- Samuel, Participant
- Only 6.4% of the regular 901 characters on scripted primetime US TV programming in 2017 were LGBTIQ.⁷

Their solutions are:

Accurate and respectful storytelling

- ♥ That more LGBTIQ characters are written into mainstream media (especially TV and movies).
- ♥ LGBTIQ people are represented more as writers for film, TV and print, especially for storylines with LGBTIQ people. This would allow for character development and representation that does not focus solely on sexual activity.
- ♥ LGBTIQ characters are exclusively portrayed by LGBTIQ actors.

IDEA 10: LISTEN TO AND RESPECT LGBTIQ YOUTH

FOR “PEOPLE IN AUTHORITY” (GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITY SERVICES, SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES) TO EMBED YOUNG PEOPLE INTO THEIR DECISION MAKING PROCESSES AND PROVIDE ACTIVE AND VISIBLE LGBTIQ INCLUSION WITHIN THEIR PROGRAMS.

109 VOTES

Experiences:

Young people felt that there are many organisations that superficially help LGBTIQ to make themselves look good and/or make money. This includes businesses adopting pride messaging without being inclusive or supporting the community.

They felt people in authority, like schools, health services and government agencies, often don't take their concerns seriously, or accept their experiences as evidence. Many trans and gender diverse young people spoke about experiencing deliberate misgendering.

- Research shows only 27% of young LGBTIQ people at school reported people in leadership positions using their preferred name and pronoun as ‘mostly appropriate’⁸
- 40% of *Queer Ideas Festival* participants said they felt ‘a lot more’ or ‘way more’ heard by their government after attending the festival.⁹
- “So many fictional queer icons are looked up to by LGBT youth but producers and their companies ran by cis hetero people are “queer baiting” and using unrealistic representation to earn money. Other companies are cashing in on pride month and LGBT people.” - Zoe, Participant

Their solutions are:

Visible support from organisations

- ♥ For workplaces and schools to celebrate LGBTIQ events and days of significance, while also demonstrating financial or in-kind support to LGBTIQ services and community. They should only celebrate visibility by flying the rainbow flag if there is inclusive action attached to it.
- ♥ For pride events (such as Midsumma and Mardi Gras) to elevate LGBTIQ communities and organisations before mainstream businesses.
- ♥ For LGBTIQ people, especially young people, to be represented on organisation steering groups, boards and within decision-making processes.

Education

- ♥ For inclusive language guides and LGBTIQ resources to be created and made available for people in positions of authority to ensure that they are inclusive of LGBTIQ identities and respecting LGBTIQ youth.





COMING OUT & WELLBEING

The challenges associated with coming out and openly expressing sexual and gender identity were raised frequently by young people throughout all areas of workshop discussions and surveys. While the young people acknowledged visibility for LGBTIQ identities has improved, they spoke at length about their experiences of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, particularly in a school and family contexts.

Unhealthy, abusive, or “toxic” relationship experiences came up repeatedly, with young people sharing their lack of education and support when experiencing these. This was felt to be made significantly harder if they are not yet out and open about their LGBTIQ identity.

Coupled with the higher rates of discrimination and abuse (discussed as coming from both the broader community as well as professional health services), the participants felt that their wellbeing was at a significant disadvantage and discussed feeling fearful of accessing support when needed.

Ultimately, young people want to feel comfortable being open about their LGBTIQ identities, and to be well equipped with information and support, especially from their peers, on coming out, mental health, and wellbeing.

These are their ideas for how to address this.

When growing up a person never has to come out as straight. Why is this? Why do I feel as though straight is “normal?” Why did I have to come out to my parents as gay, but my brother never had to come out as straight?
- Jenny

My mental health has been greatly affected by my sexuality. From ages 12-14, I used to see myself as wrong, my feelings and identity were wrong. I used to cry a lot, I kept all of my emotions on the inside in hopes of becoming the strong, stoic male, instead of the sensitive, emotional boy I was. I am an atheist, but at the time I was that desperate to be straight that I actually tried to pray the gay away.
- Joel

Constantly coming out is something I always have to deal with. People often assume I’m straight because I don’t present as queer enough. Currently I present as very femme and my relationship is with a man so people don’t take me seriously or just make assumptions.
- Steph

IDEA 11: SUPPORT AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA & TRANSPHOBIA

FOR MORE SUPPORT TO BE PROVIDED TO LGBTIQ YOUTH WHO EXPERIENCE HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA. A GOVERNMENT FUNDED CAMPAIGN SHOULD BE CREATED TO REDUCE COMMUNITY ABUSE AGAINST LGBTIQ YOUNG PEOPLE.



Experiences:

Young people discussed that the word 'gay' is still used largely as an insult by other young people. In addition, deliberate misgendering and refusal to use correct pronouns were also experiences they shared.

They discussed that while the Internet can help them to connect and find community, that cyberbullying is still a prolific and prominent form of homophobia and transphobia.

Young people expressed being unsure about how to react, especially when it comes to standing up for themselves, calling it out, or when to ignore it. There is a sense of helplessness and feelings of powerless to stop homophobia and transphobia.

- "I changed my name and came out as transgender at work. My manager refused to print my new name on a name tag and created a policy that your name tag had to match your ID just so that they didn't have to support me." Anon, Participant
- 64.1% of young LGBTIQ people have been verbally abused (e.g. called names), 17.8% had been physically abused (e.g. assaulted), and 31.6% had reported other types of homophobia.¹⁰

Their solutions are:

Support and Training

- ♥ For the Victorian Government to fund awareness campaigns and the promotion of existing support services to young people who are not currently aware they exist, such as in schools and at youth events.
- ♥ To fund specific employer LGBTIQ training, particularly for small businesses where young people work (such as cafes and retail stores).

Community Education

- ♥ For the Victorian Government to develop a state-wide media campaign that discourages homophobic and transphobic abuse, and to demonstrate positive examples of LGBTIQ youth support.

IDEA 12: RELATIONSHIPS

FOR MORE SUPPORT AND RESOURCES TO BE PROVIDED TO YOUNG PEOPLE TO INFORM ON POSITIVE AND HEALTHY LGBTIQ RELATIONSHIPS, AND TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT TO YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING FAMILY / PARTNER VIOLENCE.



Experiences:

Young LGBTIQ people talked about the many different types of relationships LGBTIQ people can have, and that positive information on these was challenging to find. Long distance relationships were challenging, but common due to social media.

Young bisexual and pansexual people feel that their LGBTIQ identity is questioned when they are not in same gender couples.

The young people spoke about being unsure about how to seek support or information on "toxic relationships" and family violence, and that media portrayal of LGBTIQ relationships wasn't helpful or positive.

- Research shows young 15-20% of LGBTIQ people access information about gay and lesbian relationships through the media as opposed to 55-60% accessing information about heterosexual relationships through the media.¹¹
- "In my ultimate world, people would be able to have consensual, safe, supportive relationships, whether they be platonic, sexual, romantic. Gender wouldn't be a barrier. Affection in platonic relationships would be normalised. Queer relationships would be recognised as valid always. No one would feel the need to question if they are queer enough." - Rory, Participant

Their solutions are:

Resources and Education

- ♥ For forums and education workshops to be held so young people can have conversations on positive relationships. This could also occur in school sexuality education.
- ♥ For youth-specific resources to be created to support the development of healthy relationships, focusing on communication, consent, boundaries, and how to identify unhealthy or abusive relationships.
- ♥ For this education to be inclusive of platonic, asexual and aromantic relationships, and that different forms of love have visibility.

Representation

- ♥ For the media to show more accurate, positive and diverse representations of LGBTIQ relationships.

IDEA 13: COMING OUT TO FAMILY

TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO LGBTIQ YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES THROUGH PEER SUPPORT, COUNSELLING, AS WELL AS PUBLISHED RESOURCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO GIVE TO THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS.



Experiences:

Young people of faith said that their "religious families are a big barrier to coming out", and that this contributed to more extreme negative reactions.

Many of the young people spoke of the negative reactions from family members when they came out. Some young people even discussed their experiences of conversion therapy and the negative impact this had had on them.

The young people felt that their LGBTIQ identities, especially bisexuality, non-binary and asexual identities, were dismissed or ignored by their families as being "just a phase", causing them to feel invalidated.

- "When I came out, my aunty told me to kill myself." - Anon, Participant
- "My grandma told me I'm going to hell after I came out." - Anon, Participant
- 65.8% of gender diverse young people experience a lack of family support when they come out.¹²

Their solutions are:

Education for families with LGBTIQ children

- ♥ To develop and host LGBTIQ events that are family-friendly to unite and connect families with one another and celebrate LGBTIQ identity.
- ♥ That LGBTIQ organisations are funded to develop and provide young people with guides for coming out to their family, and clearly communicate support services if things don't go well.
- ♥ To fund and develop specific education workshops and resources for families to help them understand LGBTIQ identities (which will take the pressure off the LGBTIQ young people having to do so).

Support for children with homophobic families

- ♥ For specialised counselling to be provided to young people and their families, especially families from culturally diverse backgrounds or religious backgrounds.
- ♥ For the Victorian and Australian Government to ban the practice of conversation therapy.

IDEA 14: MEDICAL INCLUSION & ACCESS

THAT DOCTORS AND MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS HAVE COMPULSORY TRAINING ON LGBTIQ INCLUSION, WITH PARTICULAR FOCUS ON SUPPORTING TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE YOUNG PEOPLE.



Experiences:

Many of the trans and gender diverse young people spoke about their experiences with doctors and psychologists not "knowing anything" on gender diversity. They expressed that they felt like they have more specialist medical knowledge in this area than their doctors.

Young people also spoke about having to explain basic LGBTIQ concepts, particularly gender identity, to their psychologists. These experiences created instant distrust between young people and their health providers.

Young people from rural areas said that there is limited access (if any) to trans and gender diverse friendly doctors and psychologists, and that many avoid accessing treatment due to negative experiences.

- 41% of gender diverse young people have reached out to a medical or mental health service provider who did not understand, respect or have previous experience with gender diverse people.¹³
- "There aren't many more doctors I can ask about being transgender. Rural places have almost no GPs and even less that are accepting (of transgender people)." - Finley, Participant

Their solutions are:

Training for professionals

- ♥ For LGBTIQ inclusive doctors and mental health professionals to be easier to find, via an online directory.
- ♥ For doctors and mental health professionals to have compulsory LGBTIQ inclusion training, especially on gender dysphoria, gender identity, pronouns and correct terms to use.

Rural and Regional Support

- ♥ That programs and funding supporting LGBTIQ inclusion among doctors and mental health professionals be given priority in regional and rural areas.

IDEA 15: YOUTH LED SUPPORT & RESOURCES

TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR VIDEO, ONLINE AND PUBLISHED RESOURCES THAT ARE CREATED BY YOUNG PEOPLE TO HELP OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE COME OUT AND ACCEPT THEIR IDENTITIES.

94
VOTES

Experiences:

Many young people spoke of receiving negative reactions when they came out and expressed that they don't know how to respond to these.

Young people felt that there aren't enough resources to guide them through the coming out process. Ideally, they would like to hear and learn from the experiences of other young people, as the community changes so rapidly.

Young people discussed not knowing where to turn or what services were available to them in Victoria, highlighting that while support is available, this may not be communicated to all LGBTIQ youth.

- "Come out safely, the way you want, don't let anyone take that from you. When you're ready, you're ready!" - Armani, Participant
- "When I came out I had no idea there were places I could go to get queer relevant counselling. I wish I had known earlier".
- 77% of young LGBTIQ people find their peers to be a good source of information and also a support in knowing that they are not alone in many of their experiences. Peers as a resource also ranked in number 2 on where young LGBTIQ people get their information, after the internet.¹⁴

Their solutions are:

Creation of youth-led resources and programs

- ♥ For the Victorian Government to fund training, support and creation of youth-developed support videos and written resources to provide other young people with support coming out and accepting their identities.
- ♥ For more funding for peer support groups and social support programs that young people can access to discuss their coming out experiences and gain help.

Distribution and implementation of resources

- ♥ For increased funding for schools and community organisations to purchase LGBTIQ specific resources and literature.
- ♥ For regional areas and hubs (especially libraries and community organisations) to prioritise distribution of free LGBTIQ resources and material for LGBTIQ youth and their families.

IDEA 16: SUPPORT FOR QTIPOC AND A PEOPLE OF FAITH

SUPPORT PROVIDED FOR PEOPLE TO BRIDGE THEIR QTIPOC/FAITH-BASED IDENTITIES AND THEIR LGBTIQ IDENTITIES.

91
VOTES

Experiences:

Young people expressed that it is often difficult to connect to both their gender and sexual identity as well as their culture or faith.

They spoke about their families finding it hard to understand their LGBTIQ identity, and how they were conflicted between their religious beliefs and supporting their child.

Some young QTIPoC/People of Faith spoke about not coming out to their families for fear of being rejected. This further enhanced their feelings of isolation and shame.

- "I had a problem with conflicting identities, my Filipino identity and my queer identity. Rejecting my Filipino heritage played a big part in my declining mental health, because it is something I couldn't run from. As I've grown through the years, I've learned about the LGBTQ+ community in Philippines and accepted that the Filipino culture isn't all toxic. I'm proud to be Filipino and queer, and I'm proud of myself in terms of progress I've made." - Ryle, Participant
- Young people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) and religious backgrounds are less likely to come out to their parents and also less likely to be supported when they do.¹⁵

Their solutions are:

Outreach and connection to international community

- ♥ For the Victorian Government to publicly condemn homophobia and transphobia in countries where LGBTIQ identities are being persecuted.

Specific support

- ♥ To increase funding and hosting of QTIPoC youth-specific groups, events and activities.
- ♥ To develop resources and information guides that centre around coming out and accepting your LGBTIQ identity as a person of faith and/or colour.
- ♥ To fund additional counsellors and psychologists who are QTIPoC and understand cultural sensitivities for QTIPoC, people of faith and their families.



GLOSSARY

ASEXUAL / ACE

Someone who has little or no sexual attraction to other people.

AROMANTIC / ARO

Someone who has little or no romantic attraction to other people.

BI-ERASURE

Or bisexual invisibility is the tendency to ignore bisexuality as a valid identity.

BIPHOBIC

Used to describe a whole range of negative feelings or behaviours towards anyone who is bisexual or pansexual, their desires and/or behaviours, that can lead to discriminatory actions or abuse.

BISEXUAL

Described as an attraction to someone of the same gender and other genders.

CISGENDER OR CIS

Someone who is not transgender or gender diverse, and who identifies with the sex they were assigned by doctors at birth. Sometimes written as 'cis' for short, the term comes from Latin meaning 'on the same side as' and is used in contrast with 'trans' meaning 'on the other side of'.

CONSENT

Is when two people mutually agree to engaging in an activity.

FIRST NATIONS

Refers to the indigenous people of the land. In this report it refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

GENDER DYSPHORIA

The distress a person experiences as a result of the sex they were assigned at birth.

GENDER DIVERSE

Describes a person who feels that their gender identity does not fit with their assigned sex. For example, someone who is raised as a girl may feel as though the categories of female/feminine are restrictive or don't apply to them and may identify as gender diverse.

HETERO

Short for heterosexual, or someone who is attracted exclusively to another gender.

HOMOPHOBIA

Used to describe a whole range of negative feelings or behaviours towards anyone who is queer. Homophobia can lead to discrimination or abuse, including using words like 'poof'.

INTERSECTIONALITY

The mixed nature of social factors such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, often creating an overlap and increased rate of discrimination or disadvantage.

INTERSEX

People who are intersex are born with natural variations in their body that differ from what we might expect to be

'typically' male/female. This can include (but is not limited to) variations in hormones, chromosomes, and sexual organs. A lot of us are taught that when you have high testosterone that you're male, but if you're a male that is born with low testosterone you may describe yourself as intersex.

NEURODIVERSITY

Describes diverse brain function. This can include those labelled Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Autistic Spectrum, and others .

NON-BINARY

An umbrella term people use to describe gender that doesn't fit squarely into male or female. This can be a mix of both, fluid, or something else entirely.

PANSEXUAL

Describes the sexual, romantic or emotional attraction towards people regardless of their sex or gender identity.

POC

Acronym of Person of Colour

OUTED

When someone publicly reveals someone else's gender identity or sexuality without their permission.

QTIPoC

Describes a Queer, Trans, Intersex Person of Colour

QUEER

A common term used to represent anyone who is same gender attracted or gender diverse. We use this word interchangeably with the acronym LGBTIQ. The word queer was originally a slur used to put down and offend LGBTIQ people, it has now been reclaimed and used with pride by many people in the community. We acknowledge that some people in the community are still not comfortable being called or using the word queer.

QUEER BAITING

When a film or TV show inauthentically use LGBTIQ characters to draw in viewers.

SEXUALITY

Sexuality describes who you are attracted to physically and romantically. It's totally different to your gender identity, although sometimes people are confused about this.

STEREOTYPING

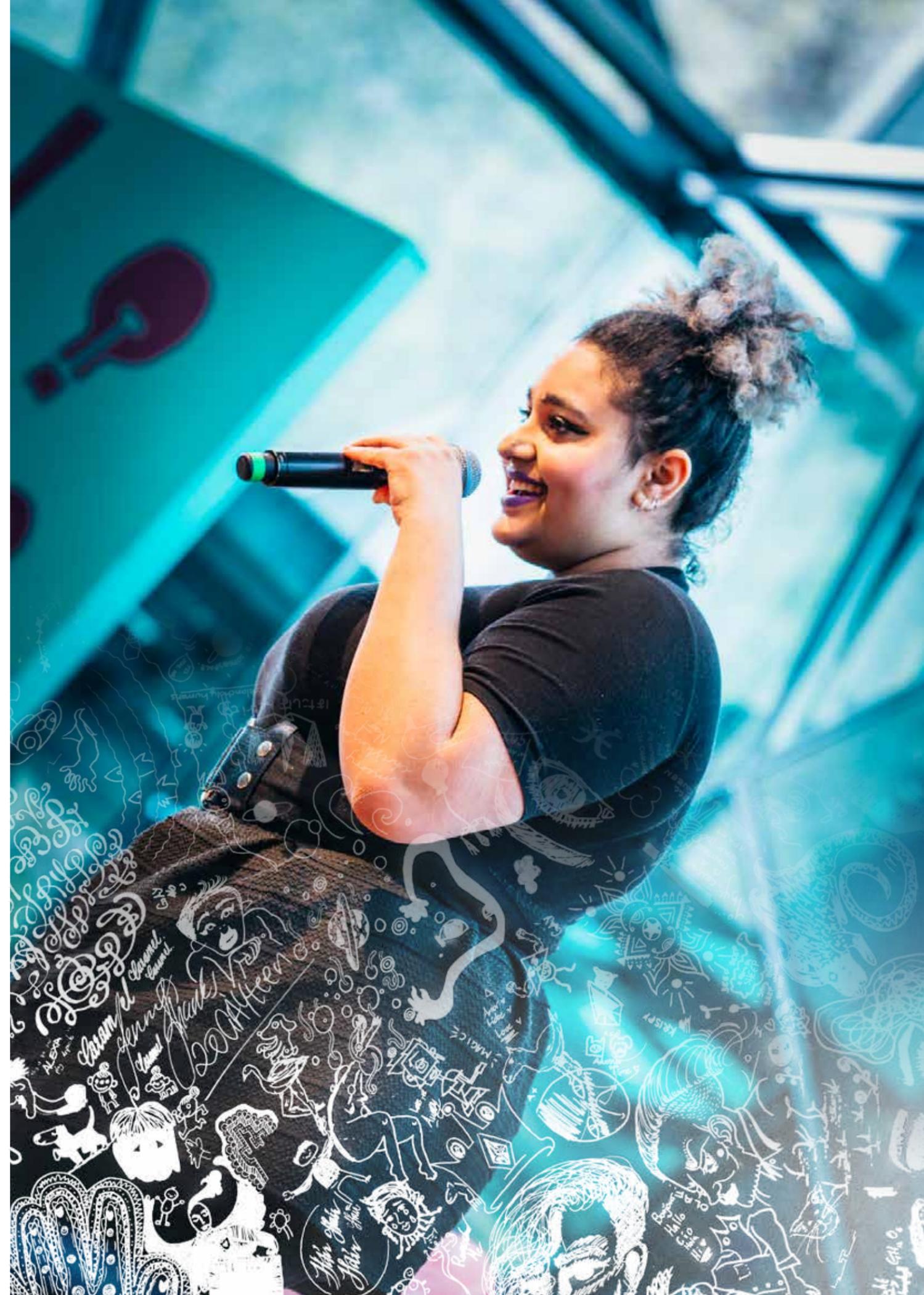
Generalising that all people belonging to a particular group have certain characteristics.

TOKENISM

Making a purely symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from under-represented groups in order to give the appearance of sexual or racial equality within a workforce.

TRANSGENDER

Sometimes gender diverse people feel that their gender doesn't match the sex they were assigned at birth, ie - someone born with a penis might identify as a girl - this is referred to as being transgender. Sometimes trans people change their name, their clothes, or even make change to their bodies. Sometimes they don't.



METHODOLOGY

SCOPE

1. Time & Attention

One limitation on gathering data through workshop discussions was ensuring a balance between providing enough time to flesh out and discuss ideas whilst also keeping participants engaged and not tiring them out with dense content.

Breaks, snacks and interactive activities were used to maintain engagement, and alternative data collection methods, such as worksheets, drawing tables, and surveys were also used to maximise engagement.

2. Challenging Content

Factoring in that some young people may prefer to share their thoughts and experiences privately, and others would prefer to share openly, a combination of group discussions and individual private worksheets were used to cater to both preferences.

As many of the topics discussed contained challenging content that may cause distress, the young people were supported by youth workers throughout the workshops and *Queer Ideas Festival* more broadly. While every attempt was made to create a safe and supportive space, we acknowledge that not all young people may have felt comfortable contributing to all topics in this way.

3. Demographic:

91% of attendees were between the ages of 14 and 20 (inclusive), which indicates that the vast majority of attendees were of high school age or have only recently graduated from high school. This demographic bias is reflected in the high representation of secondary schools and education themes within the data.

A high level of trans and gender diverse youth, as well as smaller representations of QTIPoC, People of Faith, and Aboriginal / Torres Strait islanders may have affected the data.

Young people who identified as having an intersex variation were under-represented in attendee demographics when compared to the population.

METHOD

1. Priority Demographics

A commitment to the representation of diverse identities in all aspects of the *Queer Ideas Festival* was made by the Minus18 Foundation during the project submission and initial proposal to the Victorian Government. The priority demographics for the *Queer Ideas Festival* included LGBTIQ people who are:

- From regional and rural areas;
- Neurodivergent;
- Trans and gender diverse;
- Female identifying;
- People of Colour
- People of Faith; and
- People with a disability.

These demographics were all represented amongst the event production team, the Youth Advisory Planning Group (YAPG), event volunteers, artists, speakers and workshop facilitators.

2. Event Production Team

An Event Production Team was recruited by Minus18 to implement the event, consisting of:

- 2 Event Producers
- Youth & Volunteer Coordinator
- Marketing Coordinator
- Support Staff

3. Research and Planning

The Event Production Team consulted with and researched models of other organisations who have successfully hosted youth forums and summits. The team explored how they facilitated workshops, gathered data and evaluated the impact and outcomes of their event. The team also looked at how they created a safe space for young people to feel comfortable in their engagement and models for providing youth support during discussion of sensitive topics.

This process informed the Event Production Team to provide clear transparency to the young people on how the data would be used,

A special thank you to the generous assistance of:

- Youth Parliament of Victoria (YMCA)
- VIC Student Representative Council
- Rainbow Network Victoria

4. Youth Advisory Planning Group

Utilising a youth-driven framework, The Youth & Volunteer Coordinator recruited the five youth leaders who made up the Youth Advisory Planning Group (YAPG) to initiate and advise on the planning and implementation of the *Queer Ideas Festival*. These young leaders were chosen through an online application process which was promoted through Minus18 social and volunteer networks.

The YAPG developed the key discussion themes for the *Queer Ideas Festival* and formed the foundation of data workshop planning.

5. Volunteers

10 volunteers were recruited by the Minus18 Youth & Volunteer Coordinator to support the implementation of the two day event, offering assistance in event coordination and logistics.

6. Artists and Speakers

DJs, drag queens, performers, singers and speakers were engaged to enhance the interactivity of the event where a concert was held to provide a fun counterbalance to the data-collection and workshop discussions. These artists were promoted in the marketing of the *Queer Ideas Festival* to support the recruitment of attendees.

7. Youth Festival Participants

Applications for the *Queer Ideas Festival* were promoted to Minus18 social networks (19,056 people on Facebook, 8,542 people on Instagram and 6,490 people via an email database). 155 applications were received.

17 Regional scholarships were also provided to WayOut Wodonga, Headspace Mildura, and Headspace Horsham to cover the costs of travel and accommodation for their LGBTIQ young people and youth workers to travel to and stay in Melbourne for the duration of the event.

The final 120 young people were selected by Minus18 to ensure the strongest representation of identities across the outlined priority areas and age groups.

8. Workshop Facilitators

Workshop facilitators were selected with identities aligning to the key inclusion priorities from within the LGBTIQ community. They were also selected for their experience and passion for LGBTIQ issues and for their experience in creating engaging and relevant workshops for young people. The four facilitators were:

Sha Gaze

Sha Gaze is a QTIPoC born on Turtle Island and relocated to Australia. They are a qualified art therapist and drama teacher. A passionate advocate and community activator as well as multi-disciplined artist, their work focuses on diversity, inclusion, justice for black and First Nations people and decolonisation. Sha is currently facilitating a visual art collaborative project with over 100 artists from around the world.

Carly Fern

Carly Fern has studied a Bachelor of Contemporary Arts (Honors), Transpersonal Counselling, Business Management and is currently completing a Cert IV in Disability Support Work. Carly is also an independent recording artist and theatre maker, having toured her work worldwide. Her personal artwork focuses on authentic and vulnerable self-expression and encouraging others to do the same. Her work in the community echoes this as a passionate advocate for LGBTQIA+, mental illness and disability through public art outcomes, community events and direct support and action.

Fleassy Malay

Two times TEDx speaker and viral poet, Fleassy Malay is an Internationally renowned spoken word artist, speaker and coach. With a Bachelor of Arts degree in Performance and Visual Arts from Brighton University in the UK, plus a national diploma distinction from The BRIT school, Fleassy now works as a global advocate for Women's rights and a fierce voice for the power of authenticity and connection as a social change tool. She has been teaching spoken word, performance and public speaking for the past 6 years and is the founder of Melbourne's acclaimed Women's Spoken Word event, Mother Tongue.

Jessica Walton

Jessica Walton is an author, qualified secondary teacher, parent, and proud queer disabled woman. She wrote *Introducing Teddy* to help explain gender identity in a simple, positive way to her kids. One of Jess' parents is trans, and she wanted her kids to know that it's important

to be yourself and be accepting of others. In 2017 Jess was a Writers Victoria Write-ability Fellow, producing her first poetry zine, about cancer, amputation, disability and pain. Jess' most recent published work is a YA short story in *Meet Me at the Intersection*, an #ownvoices anthology published by Fremantle Press in September 2018.

9. Data Collection Design

The Event Producers, in collaboration with the Workshop Facilitators and Youth Advisory and Planning Group, developed the data collection methods for the *Queer Ideas Festival*.

The Youth & Volunteer Coordinator worked with the Event Producers to design safety measures to ensure that festival attendees were supported, particularly in providing assistance during discussion of sensitive topics. Four youth workers, identified at the event as 'Safety Angels', were recruited to be present for the duration of the festival (including at the workshops, activity areas and final concert). A designated support space and a duty-of-care strategy was developed. These methods were:

a. Workshops

Two half-day Workshop streams were developed to capture discussion, experiences and ideas.

Workshop 1: 'The Told' Personal Narrative Writing

Attendees were given the opportunity to develop and write a short narrative about their experiences as a young LGBTIQ person.

Workshop 2: 'The Bold' Ideas and Solutions

Attendees were given the opportunity to brainstorm solutions to some of the challenges that they face and share ideas that they believe will help improve the wellbeing and support of LGBTIQ people. They worked in groups to flesh out ideas and then presented them in the workshop.

- Data from the workshops were collected via:
- Workbooks the young people individually recorded their narrative, ideas and solutions in;
- Audio from workshops captured with field recorders;
- Notes documented during whole-group discussions by a workshop assistant.

b. Interactive Posters

The Youth Advisory Planning Group created prompting questions and topics that were included on interactive posters in the event space. Youth participants were encouraged to comment with their thoughts underneath each topic and were invited to complete this privately at any time during the festival.

Data was collected from the comments on the posters.

c. Drawing Table

An interactive drawing table was facilitated over the course of the two day festival. Young people were encouraged to draw their ideas for a future Victoria.



IMAGE: The final drawing table, size 1.5m x 3m

d. Videos

Minus18 partnered with VICE Media to create two videos that featured 20 of the youth participants. In the videos, the young people were questioned on the following two topics:

What advice do you have for other LGBTIQ youth?

What ideas do you have for the future of Victoria?

e. Survey

An evaluation survey was sent to participants via email after the event. The survey invited anonymous feedback on each individual's opinions and reflections of the *Queer Ideas Festival*, their feelings of safety, demographic representation and overall outcomes.

10. Data Collation & Voting

The data was compiled and grouped into 16 main "ideas" for a better Victoria. These ideas were posted to a private Minus18 Facebook group that included all event participants on the social media platform.

Youth members were asked to vote for their top ideas, "liking" an image to represent one vote, and "hearting" an image to represent three votes.

109 young people voted in this process to allocate 829 voting points to the ideas. This number is represented against each idea within this report, and determined the order they are listed in.

Final Idea	Heart = 3	Like = 1	Total
Sexual Health Education	61	11	194
Take Action Against School Bullying	53	12	171
Trans and Gender Diverse Youth	45	11	146
Regional and Rural Events	40	16	136
Youth Events & Spaces	38	16	130
Group and Events in Schools	34	23	125
LGBTIQ Elders & History	33	21	120
Intersectionality	33	17	116
Representation in the Media	31	19	112
Support Against Homophobia and Transphobia	32	15	111
Relationships	32	14	110
Listen and Respect LGBTIQ Youth	30	19	109
Support Coming Out to Family	28	20	104
Medical Inclusion and Access	28	12	96
Youth Led Support & Resources	25	19	94
QTIPoC & a People of Faith Coming Out	26	15	93

6. Publish

This data was compiled and collected into the *Queer Ideas Festival Report*. Videos were published via Minus18 social and online networks.

Some of the personal narrative stories written by young people during the *Queer Ideas Festival* were published in an anthology titled *Young & Queer*, which was published by Minus18 in May 2019.

REFERENCES

1. E. Smith et al, *From blues to rainbows: mental health and wellbeing of gender diverse and transgender young people in Australia*, The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, Melbourne, 2014, pp.50-51.
2. *ibid.*, p.51.
3. *ibid.*, p.67.
4. *ibid.*, p.56.
5. P. Strauss et al, *Trans pathways: the mental health experiences and care practices of trans young people*, Telethon Kids Institute, Perth, Australia, 2017, p.45.
6. Minus18 Foundation Ltd, *Queer ideas festival impact report*, Minus18, Melbourne, 2019, p9.
7. GLAAD Media Institute, *Where we are on TV 2018-2019*, GLAAD, Los Angeles, 2019, p.8.
8. E. Smith et al, *From blues to rainbows: mental health and wellbeing of gender diverse and transgender young people in Australia*, The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, Melbourne, 2014, pp.50.
9. Minus18, *Young and Queer Report*, Minus18 Foundation Ltd, Melbourne, 2019, p.9
10. L. Hillier et al, *Writing Themselves in 3: The third national study on the sexual health and wellbeing of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people*, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, 2010, p.71.
11. *ibid.*, p.69.
12. E. Smith et al, *From blues to rainbows: mental health and wellbeing of gender diverse and transgender young people in Australia*, The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, Melbourne, 2014, pp.84-85.
13. KH. Robinson et al, *Growing up queer: issues facing young Australians who are gender variant and sexuality diverse*, Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre, Melbourne, 2013, pp.49-50.
14. Minus18, *Young and Queer Report*, Minus18 Foundation Ltd, Melbourne, 2019, p.9
15. P. Strauss et al, , Telethon Kids Institute, Perth, Australia, 2017, p.84.



SMASHING HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA, AND TRANSPHOBIA AUSTRALIA WIDE THROUGH:



EVENTS

Making friends and having safe community supports LGBTIQ youth to build confidence and improve their mental health. Minus18 host life affirming events across Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide to give young people the space to be their true selves.



EDUCATION

Minus18 head into schools and workplaces to deliver high impact training, professional development and workshops to give you the tools you need to drive LGBTIQ inclusion.

LGBTIQ resources are available online via minus18.org.au.



CAMPAIGNS

We create campaigns to drive visibility for the high rates of bullying and discrimination LGBTIQ youth still face today and rally schools, business and individuals Australia wide to take action against bullying.

**CHAMPIONS FOR
LGBTIQ YOUTH**

**LEARN MORE
[MINUS18.ORG.AU](https://minus18.org.au)**

**THANK YOU FOR READING OUR IDEAS.
DONATE TO HELP US KEEP CREATING NEW ONES,
OR FIND OUT MORE AT:**

[MINUS18.ORG.AU](https://minus18.org.au)

f @MINUS18YOUTH



 **MINUS18**